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## ASYLUM NOTES.

BY A 'MAD DOCTOR.'

WHEN a young medical man completes his compulsory studies, and gets his labours crowned by the mysterious ordeal on graduation day known in the northern universities as 'capping,' it is not long before he awakes to a knowledge of the fact that it is only now that he is really beginning his life's work; and the question at once arises, what particular branch of medical practice is he to follow out? He may enter the army or navy; may go in for some hospital appointment; settle down in private practice in town or country; serve as medical officer on board some of the great ocean steamers plying between the mother countries and the colonies; or he may obtain an appointment as medical officer in some lunatic asylum.

By a chain of circumstances which could be of no interest to the general reader, I determined on the last line of practice, much to the surprise of my friends, who tried by evil prognostications and other means to dissuade me from my purpose.

'You really intend to go and shut yourself up in an asylum!' said they. 'Is it possible? Why, if you are not torn to pieces the first month, you will be mad yourself by the second.'

I am afraid an incredulous smile was all the return they received for their earnest solicitations. In vain I urged that asylums were not menageries inhabited by ferocious creatures bereft of all reason, human beings in form only; or that asylums were not bastilles, where people were, without any hope of release, incarcerated, whipped, manacled, and otherwise maltreated; but that, on the contrary, they were hospitals for diseases of the mind, conducted on the most humane and enlightened principles.

It was all to no purpose. All the notions they had of asylums and the insane were gathered from old-fashioned pictures by Hogarth, or from modern sensational fictions.

Any one seized as I was with a desire to see how an institution for the insane is conducted, will enter the asylum for the first time with an almost solemn dread. Here, he supposes, will be found the most wretched of his race, brought together that they may not injure themselves or others; or for the simple reason, that they are unable to cope with the ordinary battle of life, or conduct their affairs; men and women in whom reason is overthrown, and who—many of them at least—care little how and when they are fed and clothed, or what shall be done with them.

As soon as the visitor enters the spacious building, his anxiety will pass away, and his dread will lapse into admiration and wonder. Is this a palace? There are gardens around it, laid out and kept with the greatest care. There is a farm within the grounds, cultivated not only with regard to profit, but to taste. There are work-shops, in which many hands are busy, but none are overworked, and from which cheery singing and conversation may emanate. Within the house, there is in all parts perfect cleanliness and tasteful decoration. Not a room is dark, not a passage dismal. The sleeping-rooms are models of comfort, boasting of the latest improvements in spring-mattress bedding, &c.; and the living-rooms, galleries, and corridors, models not of neatness only, but of taste and beauty. In the rooms are bright pictures, flowers, and occasionally aviaries or aquaria. Hard by is a chapel, decorated in a tasteful style; and last, but not least, within the building is a grand recreation-room and theatre. If he follow one of the patients throughout the day, the patient will be found, according to his case, a member of the most perfect social system. He will have given to him, if he can do it, light work at the farm or work-shops. He will be provided with books; and in the case of the county asylums to which I refer, he will be fed and lodged at an expense to the county of about ten shillings a week, in a manner which few of the lower middle-class can command. He will have the best advice in

sickness, the most skilled nursing; and above all, he will find in the Medical Superintendent, who is by necessity a scholar and a gentleman, one ever ready to inquire into and redress, if need be, his complaints.

Naturally, after the house in which they live, the next subject which attracts attention is the patients themselves. In the asylum of which I speak, they numbered about five hundred, of whom rather more were women than men. The cause of this preponderance of females over males is not far to seek, the forms of insanity from which men suffer being on the one hand more fatal, and on the other more transitory, than the forms of insanity from which women suffer. The mental diseases of the latter are less dangerous to life, but more permanent and chronic; the result being that chronic female lunatics always preponderate over male chronic cases—that is to say, speaking generally, men either die or recover, while many women remain permanently insane.

Doctors are not yet agreed as to a thoroughly good classification of the forms of insanity; but people of unsound mind may be roughly divided into two great classes—those who are depressed or demented, and those who are maniacal or violent. It is extraordinary how the idea obtains that patients who are confined in asylums are nearly all of the latter type—raving lunatics, of furious manner and action, dishevelled in dress and appearance. The truth is that the number of such cases in asylums is exceedingly small—perhaps five per cent. of the whole; and instead of the casual visitor seeing howling, violent creatures confined behind gratings or in padded rooms, he sees numbers of people orderly in demeanour and dress, working, reading, or employing themselves rationally in endless ways.

The reader may then ask: 'Why is it that people thus capable of conducting themselves with apparent propriety and self-respect, and who are able to occupy themselves usefully, are confined at all, deprived of their liberty, separated from their friends and the world?' To reply to this, it will be necessary to enter with more detail into a description of the patients.

Many who sit there so quietly, and apparently rational in conversation and demeanour, are liable to epileptic fits, which render the subject of these fits at times one of the most dangerous class of patients, some of the most atrocious crimes known having been committed in the epileptic state. A father has been known to murder a whole household, or kill his wife, or burn his house—acts for which, the moment before or the moment after, he would express the greatest horror and grief. Many such patients are aware when these fits come upon them, and earnestly express the wish to be prevented from doing what they have no earthly power to resist. The violence of these patients exceeds the violence exhibited in any other kind of insanity; their fury is blind; and without any provocation, they will rush at the nearest bystander and tear, bite, or attack him with any implement or weapon they can seize. Dr Sankey records a case in which an epileptic man while in the fields digging was seized with a paroxysm, and, rushing blindly upon an inoffensive patient near, cut him down with the blade of a spade, inflicting frightful wounds, and killing him on the spot.

Let us now look at another and very numerous class of patients—namely, those labouring under fixed or transitory delusions. Some patients, although quite able to do easy housework—able, in fact, to perform the duties of every-day life, and to occupy themselves or engage in games with apparent sanity and propriety—are, when questioned, found to labour under the most extraordinary fancies and ideas, which to any one not accustomed to the insane, appear preposterous and incredible. There is no end to the absurdity and variety of these perverted imaginations. A man will converse with you quite intelligently on the leading article of to-day's newspaper, on the last budget, or railway stock, and then suddenly inform you that his head is made of brass, and that he has no inside—that it has been all burnt out; and no amount of reasoning will convince this man to the contrary. Indeed, there is no more hopeless task than to attempt to convince an insane person of the falsity of his delusions. He believes as firmly in the truth of them as we do that we live; his ideas are the concomitants of strange and altered feelings, which have a real existence; and until these fancies pass away, they are not to be removed by demonstration or argument. Some patients, though in good circumstances, will imagine that they are financially ruined; others, of the most blameless lives, that they have committed sins for which there is no pardon, and that they are eternally doomed.

Delusions are not, however, always of a gloomy nature; on the contrary, in one of the commonest and most fatal forms of insanity, exalted delusions are the leading feature. There are patients exhibiting in countenance and manner a feeling of well-being, a conviction that they were never better in health, and never stronger, although hardly able to place food in their mouths on account of increasing paralysis. Their extravagant notions know no bounds. One will tell us that he is a king, a marquis, or a duke, nay, even at times the Almighty. At one time he is possessed of millions of money and property; at another, he is going to pull down all London to-day, and rebuild it to-morrow. He invents wonderful machines, which will make his fortune; he discovers perpetual motion, or how to square the circle; and imagines that he has been Senior Wrangler at Cambridge half-a-dozen times running. The asylum in which he lives, he imagines to be a regal abode; and the other patients, courtiers and nobles; and, 'last scene of all,' when strength is failing, and he can scarcely stand or raise his hand to his head, he tells us that he can write his name on the ceiling with a five-hundred pound-weight hanging to his little finger.

I may in this connection touch upon a subject of much public interest—namely, the supposed illegal detention of people in asylums. To be shut up in an asylum when of sound mind, deprived of liberty, and separated from the world, would certainly be, in spite of the comforts of modern asylums, a dreadful state of matters; and seeing the powers the law has placed in the hands of medical men and magistrates, it is only natural that the public should now and again be concerned even as to the possibility of such an occurrence.

Let us glance briefly at the mode of procedure for the committal to an asylum of an insane person. In public asylums, the question of the illegal detention of parish patients has never arisen, so we need only refer to the admission of private patients to private asylums. The remarks I am about to make apply to English asylums and the English Lunacy Law, which, however, differs from the Scotch chiefly in not requiring the signature of a public judicial officer such as the sheriff. The Lunacy Law enacts that before any one can be taken to or confined in an asylum, he shall be examined as to his mental condition, separately by two medical men, who, if they find him insane, will make a written statement to that effect, showing distinctly and decidedly the grounds on which they form this opinion, on a printed form termed the *Certificate*, issued by the Commissioners in Lunacy in accordance with the Act. This, together with a form filled up by the nearest relative of the patient, is sufficient legal warrant for his removal to an asylum. If a person be only partially insane, and rational on many points, but, let us suppose, the subject of some delusions, such as one will not believe that he is insane, will refuse to believe that his perverted ideas are delusions, and in consequence feel himself grievously wronged in being deprived of his rights and liberty. It is useless to attempt to convince him that he is insane; and therefore, by means of letters and other communications with the external world, which asylum officials have neither the power nor the desire to intercept, he will give himself out as a martyr to villainous legislation, which makes it possible that he, a free British subject, should be so shut up; and hence in a great measure arise the prejudice and outcry against asylums. He may write perfectly rational letters, and display no mean intellectual power in their construction, and yet his relatives with whom he has lived, and the asylum physicians who see him constantly, aver that he commits extraordinary acts, and that he is quite unfit to manage affairs in his house or business, on account of these delusions. They may even fear him carrying into execution threats of injury to himself and others, rendering living with him intolerable, and his removal necessary.

Herein lies the great difference between diseases of the body and diseases of the mind. In the former, as a rule, the patient will be aware that he is ill, and seek for and submit to treatment; but when his mind is diseased, he refuses all ministrations, looking at them in the light of insult and injury. Again, the reader might ask: Could such a case not be managed at home, without his having to undergo the odium and stigma attendant upon being classified as a lunatic? I answer: No; because such a patient is often the responsible head of a family or business, and not only does he prove detrimental to himself by his insane acts, but he involves the honour of his profession or business, and the happiness of his family. These cases become more and more difficult to deal with in inverse proportion to the amount of mental aberration; that is to say, when the delusions are not well marked nor very demonstrable; for there are many undoubtedly insane, whose insanity it would be extremely difficult to establish to the satisfaction of an opposing counsel in a court

of law, where the examining barrister may only have had one short interview with the patient, and made up his mind that his client was of sound mind.

The consideration of these points leads up to the question: Supposing such a patient recover his reason, is it not possible that, as the law at present stands, our patient may be unnecessarily detained in confinement, especially if his detention be to the pecuniary interest of his custodian? I am quite willing to admit that the Lunacy Law, and, for the matter of that, any other law, is far from perfect; yet, on the whole, its working is most equitable and just. Some time ago, however, public opinion was so strong on this matter, that a special Committee of the House of Commons was instructed to inquire into the question of illegal removal to or detention in asylums. This Committee sat for six months; and ascertained that for the last eighteen years over one hundred and eighty-five thousand certificates had been issued, and persons shut up upon these certificates; yet they did not discover a single instance in which the patient had been shut up without good and sufficient reason. Indeed, there is a reverse tendency in these latter years, namely, to let out asylum patients on the first signs of their recovering. This question is often fraught with extreme difficulty and anxiety to the physician in responsible charge of such cases; and to illustrate my meaning, let me refer to the following sad case, which occurred recently.

A young married man was removed to and confined in an asylum on account of homicidal tendencies towards his wife. After a short sojourn in the — Asylum, he showed signs of convalescence, to the great delight of his relatives, and particularly his wife, who at once began to crave for his discharge. This the superintendent refused, urging that he had not been sufficiently long under observation to warrant him in discharging him as 'recovered.' The wife, not satisfied with this, went to the higher tribunal—to the Commissioners in Lunacy, who intimated that they would inquire into the matter; which they immediately did, getting in the first instance a Report from the Medical Superintendent of the asylum where the patient was placed. They advised the wife to delay, to wait until recovery had been more thoroughly established before demanding his discharge. Still dissatisfied, however, and impatient, she applied to the Home Secretary, who in turn referred her to the proper authorities, the Commissioners in Lunacy. At length, nothing would satisfy her but his immediate discharge, which the Superintendent reluctantly acceded to, under protest. What was the result? He was the means of his wife's death the very night he was discharged.

Now, what does such a case—and there are many such—teach us? It teaches us, as Lord Shaftesbury, the noble and enlightened chairman of the Lunacy Commission has pointed out, that those who are in charge of the legal and medical duties in regard to lunacy must consider not only the interests of the insane but also the interests of the public; that they must be very careful indeed how they hastily discharge

and let loose on the public persons whom they are not quite certain have been restored to the power of self-control. Further on, referring to the work of asylum physicians, he continues: 'Indeed, I can conceive nothing more sublime and more Christian-like than the nature of their labours; and though there were in former times great instances of cruelty and abuse, my experience, extending over fifty years of the various asylums, private as well as public, is not only eminently favourable to the highest order of intellect, but to the truest and deepest sentiments of humanity towards the poor creatures placed therein.'

### VALENTINE STRANGE.

A STORY OF THE PRIMROSE WAY.

CHAPTER XL.—'MOTHER,' SAID GERARD ON THE EVENING OF HIS RETURN, 'I AM GOING ABROAD.'

NEXT day, Gerard and Hiram were in London. The master stood with a little scrap of newspaper in his hand, on the hearth-rug of a cheerless room in an hotel; and the servant watched his countenance furtively, and drew but little comfort from it. Snow had fallen in the streets, and the sky was leaden and cheerless. The hotel was far-away East, out of Hiram's knowledge of town; and he was all curiosity to know what was afoot, and fear lest the enterprise should be dangerous for Gerard. For Hiram firmly believed that the young fellow had bent himself to have revenge upon the man who had wrecked his life; and though he would willingly have looked on at any such ceremony as a horse-whipping, he feared that no such vengeance would satisfy Gerard.

'Search!'

'Sir?'

'Bring me my overcoat, and wrap yourself up well. It's a bitter day.'

'More snow, I think, by-and-by,' said Hiram. The statement about the weather included almost every unnecessary word Gerard had spoken to him for at least a week, and he was hungry for conversation. His overture met with no answer, however, and he retired. 'Might as well valet a dumb man,' reflected Hiram, 'and be deaf and dumb myself.' Master and man prepared to face the cheerless streets. 'Come with me,' said Gerard; and set out, Hiram following. He walked briskly eastward, pausing at times to make inquiries; and after a journey of perhaps a mile, stopped before a pair of great wooden gates, and rang a bell, the handle of which nestled in the wall, almost hidden by finely-powdered snow. Behind the gates there was a great clanging of hammers on resounding iron; and when the small doorway in the gate was opened, Hiram, looking through, saw a boiler-maker's yard, and men at work there, vigorously. 'What on airth,' said Hiram to himself, 'brings the boss to a place like this? Is he going to cure himself with business? Best thing he could do.' Gerard asked a question of the man who opened the gate. His follower was deafened by the noise of hammers, and caught neither it nor the answer; but pursued him across a slushy yard with tracts of melting snow in it, to a counting-house which stood beside a dry dock. Here a grimy personage

received them, and in answer to Gerard's inquiry for the principal, indicated himself.

'You have a yacht for sale or hire?' said Gerard.

'Half-a-dozen,' said the grimy principal.

'A steam-yacht, iron-built, *Channel Queen*?'

'Yes; for sale or hire. Selling price, eight thousand. Hire—crew included—hundred and twenty a month.'

'Can I see her?' asked Gerard. The grimy personage rang a bell; and a grimmer than himself answering the summons, he nodded sideways at Gerard, jerked out 'Show *Channel Queen*,' and disappeared. The new-comer led them into the yard. Snow had begun to fall again, and the place was indescribably dreary. Hiram's thoughts were in keeping with it; but there was one comforting reflection in his mind. 'He means to take me with him,' he thought; 'and he'll have to get over my body to do it when the time comes.' Two minutes' walking brought them to the side of Thames, and the grimy man raised his voice dolefully, and called a wherryman, who stood smoking and watching the dirty tide of the river, a hundred yards away, with his back against a sheltering mass of timber. The man hurried up. 'Show *Channel Queen*,' said the grimy guide, and retraced his steps. The wherryman grunted, and unfastened a boat which swung at the shiny and rotting piles upon the edge of the river. Gerard and Hiram seated themselves, and the man pulled across the river.

'Do you know the *Channel Queen*?' asked Gerard as they went.

'Know her,' said the boatman, with a gratuitous execration; 'why shouldn't I know her?'

'Is she a fast boat?'

'Fast? Ay; she's fast enough. There she is. Look at her. Did y'e'ver see a boat with them lines on her as wasn't fast? Not you. Nor me neither. Screw, she is. Engines is a bit too powerful. Jolts her like, when you drives her hard, her engines does. 'Eadachy sort of craft to travel in; but—with other verbal gratuitous—'can't she walk!'

'Can't I go on board her?' asked Gerard.

'Who said you couldn't?' inquired the man ungraciously; and pulling nearer, caught a hanging chain. 'Up you get,' he said with a grin; 'nobody's a-hindering of you, mister.' Gerard seized the chain, and with some damage to his gloves, went up hand over hand, and swung on to the deck. 'Tain't the first time he's been aboard a yacht, I know,' said the boatman, turning on Hiram. 'Navy, maybe; eh, mister?' Hiram made no answer, but listened to the hollow footsteps of his master on the deck, until he lost them. After a pause of perhaps five minutes, Gerard came to the rail of the vessel and called him: 'Come up here, Search.'

Hiram went up the shallow side like an exaggerated monkey, and the boatman looked after him. 'Reg'lar old salts the pair of 'em,' he said; and having knocked the still burning ashes of his pipe into the brim of his hat, nursed them carefully from the wind whilst he refilled, tilted them back again, and smoked on contented.

'Do you know anything about this kind of thing, Search?' asked Gerard, stamping a foot on the deck.

'I've knocked about 'em a bit,' said Hiram.



'I was stoker aboard one o' the Messagerie vessels for a year; an' steward's man aboard an Atlantic steamer for three v'y'ges. It stands to reason I looked about a bit; but I ain't a connyssure.—Hello, what's that?' A head appearing above deck startled the usually immovable Hiram.

'Man cleaning engines,' said Gerard, who had caught the infection for that verbal economy which seemed to live about the *Channel Queen*. 'Come and look at her.'

They went over the little vessel together, Hiram making observations here and there, Gerard dumb again. When they had inspected every part of her, they left, and were pulled back across the river; and the wherryman, richer by half-a-crown, returned to his sheltering heap of timber. Gerard led the way to the office, and entering, said briefly: 'I can have *Channel Queen* examined, I suppose?'

'When you like.'

'When can she sail, if I take her?'

'When you've got crew aboard and fires up.'

'Do you provision crew, if I hire her?'

'No; you do.'

'Good-morning,' said Gerard.

'Good-morning,' replied the grimy man, and shot away again.

Away once more plodded master and servant through the miry streets, the former inquiring here and there as before. This time their wanderings ended in an office, where, for the consideration of a ten-pound note, a gentleman undertook to examine the *Channel Queen* and to report upon her seaworthiness and general capacity. Next Hiram was sent off in one direction with orders for stores, to be held in readiness for immediate delivery; whilst Gerard went another way on a like errand; and so the whole day passed busily. The next day was dull and idle; but on the next a perfectly satisfactory report of the yacht having reached him, Gerard hired her for six months, paid a deposit, left references, and in great haste travelled homewards. During all this time, Hiram had felt quite clear about his master's purpose, but had puzzled himself a good deal to divine the reason which had set him so suddenly upon it, after having rested quiescent for more than half a year. The explanation came, by an unlooked-for source.

'Mother,' said Gerard on the evening of his return, 'I am going abroad.' He had always been fairly accustomed to his own way; his father's 'Very well, my lad,' having been ready in answer to most of his proposals; and latterly nobody had questioned his comings and goings.

'Not for long, I hope?' said Mrs Lumby.

'No,' said Gerard; 'probably not for long.'

His mother would not enter any protest against his going, but it cost her a pang for all that. Gerard's manner was not encouraging to hope, and she believed that he was but going away to brood above his misery; but he was so hard and stern of late, that she did not dare to venture upon any dissuasion. Milly was bolder.

'Where are you going, Gerard?' she asked.

'Where fate leads me,' he answered with a pallid smile.

'You are uncertain?'

'At present; yes.'

It was in her mind to ask him why he was

going, and she had already framed the words in which to present her question; but he fixed his eyes upon her in a way which seemed at once to anticipate inquiry and refuse an answer. She would not have felt that, but for the suspicion which filled her thoughts. He was going to seek out Val Strange—perhaps to challenge him to a duel in one of those foreign countries in which Val made his shifting home. How could she be sure of this? Not by interrogating Gerard, who would assuredly return no answer. Perhaps by questioning Hiram. She resolved to question Hiram. Milly had a little bower of a sitting-room—her own—in which in happier times she had been wont to entertain her friends; the scene of many a girlish confidence and frolic. Meeting Hiram in the corridor outside, she summoned him to this apartment.

'Do you know that Mr Gerard is going abroad?' she asked.

'I believe he is, miss,' responded Hiram.

'Do you know where he is going?'

'Well, I can't truthfully say I do,' he answered.

'Do you know why he is going?' she demanded. There was an anxiety in her manner which Hiram fully shared. He seemed to see ahead a worse trouble than had yet fallen upon the House; and though he was but newly in its service, there was no man who ate the bread of the Lumby's who was more devoted to them than he.

'Wall, miss,' he returned tentatively, 'I am not in Mr Gerard's confidence, up to now.'

Her woman's wit and native penetration told her that his suspicions clashed with hers. 'Mr Search,' she said, standing before him with pale face and clasped petitionary hands, 'may I trust you?' She did not think of her own attitude, or of the appeal in her voice; but taken together with his own fears, they touched Hiram profoundly.

'Miss,' he said, 'you may safely trust me with your life.'

'You know the whole miserable story of your master and—Mr Strange?'—He inclined his head gravely.—'I have heard,' she went on, 'the circumstances which induced my cousin to take you into his service'—Hiram waved a deprecatory hand at that allusion, and his sallow cheek flushed a little.—'and I believe you are attached to him.'

'That is so, miss,' said Hiram with preternatural gravity.

'At that wretched time,' said Milly, 'one of our fears was that Mr Gerard would attempt some terrible revenge upon Mr Strange.'

'That was my idea tew,' he answered.

'And now the same fear returns,' she said with a face of pallor.

'Miss,' said Hiram, 'excuse me. I should go with you, if it wa'n't for one thing. He's kept as quiet as a winter dormouse for half a year. Why should he fire up now, without anything to set a light to him?'

'There is a reason,' said Milly in response. 'Mr Strange and his wife are living apart from each other.'

'He knows that?' inquired Hiram.

'He knows it,' she returned. 'Mr Strange is sailing from place to place in the Levant, and

his wife is living at Naples.' At that news, a sudden certainty shot into Hiram's mind, and declared itself so plainly in his face that Milly saw it at a glance. She made a step towards him. 'What do you know?'

'There air circumstances,' said Hiram, with deliberative slowness, 'when the or'nary rules of honourable conduct must be set on one side. I think this is one of 'em. I ain't pledged to silence, but that's no matter. Has Mr Gerard Lumby told you, miss, that he's hired anything in London city, lately?'

'No,' she answered, half bewildered.

'Well, he has.' He paused again. 'He's hired—a yacht; and he's goin' to sail in her'—

'In pursuit of Valentine Strange!' she cried. 'Oh, Mr Search, this must be prevented. Think,' she said, twining her hands together, 'of the misery it will bring upon us all—his mother, his father, all who value him.'

'I'm afraid,' said Hiram, deeply moved by her distress, and sharing in it, 'it'll be about as useful to try and turn him as it would if he was St Paul's Cathedral.'

'Have you spoken to him?' she asked.—He shook his head sadly.—'Will you?'

'It ain't any use me speakin' to him,' he responded mournfully. 'No, miss. I might as well throw stones at the Solar System.' He stood despondently for a moment, and then added, but with no great hopefulness: 'You might try him.'

'I will try him,' she answered, and left Hiram standing there.

His large dark eyes and fallow features were full of mourning. 'Tain't a spark and out again with the boss,' he said sadly. 'Slow, steady goes the bellows all the time, and he's white-hot to the core. I know the sort. It's British. And an uncommon ugly sort it is to have agen you. Yes, sir.' Then with a sudden change of face and figure, he said: 'Hiram, maybe you'll be wanted yet. Mark my words, young man, and be on the spot when you air wanted. When the time comes, Hiram, you will be wanted—real bad.'

## THE TARBERT SHIP-CANAL.

BY CUTHBERT BEDE.

CUTTING an isthmus and converting it to a ship-canal so as to be a highway for commerce, is a kind of engineering work for which the present century will be remarkable in the annals of history. By the Suez Canal, M. de Lesseps united the Red and Mediterranean seas; General Turr is cutting the Isthmus of Corinth for the commerce of the Levant; and the Isthmus of Panama may perhaps be canalised after the same fashion. Twelve years ago, the legislature of Massachusetts proposed to make a similar canal, to save vessels passing round the stormy coast of Cape Cod. It is now proposed to do the same with the isthmus of Tarbert, which connects the peninsula of Cantire with Argyllshire, and thus shorten the journey from the Clyde to the north-west of Scotland, and also save the rough voyage round the Mull of Cantire. It is also proposed to do for the Irwell at Manchester what was done for the Clyde at Glasgow—namely, to deepen it so as

to admit the tide, and thus convert Manchester into a seaport town.

The meeting at Glasgow held, in July last, to consider the scheme of the projected Tarbert Canal, was presided over by the Duke of Argyll, and received the warmest and most influential support. The Canal as proposed will be about two miles in length, with a breadth of fifty-six feet, and a depth of eighteen feet at low-water, and will thus be available for the largest vessel at present capable of navigating the Western Loch. It will save forty-five miles to vessels bound from the Clyde to the north *via* the Sound of Jura, and forty miles to those proceeding *via* the Sound of Islay; and whereas some sixty miles of the present route round the Mull of Cantire—namely, from Pladda to Gigha—is often stormy and dangerous, this risk will be entirely avoided. Glasgow and the other ports of the Firth of Clyde carry on a large trade with the north and north-west of Scotland, the annual clearances in steamers alone amounting at present to nearly five hundred thousand tons, almost all of which may be expected to use the Canal. Weather-bound sailing-vessels will doubtless also avail themselves of it; and with a transit charge of sixpence per ton, a clear revenue of twelve thousand pounds a year may fairly be expected. The cost of the undertaking is still a matter of uncertainty, but two hundred thousand pounds is given as the maximum; and, as the enterprise has met with ready support, an influential Committee elected, an engineer appointed, the preliminary details adjusted, and most of the money subscribed, there seems little doubt that in a year or two the Tarbert Ship-canal will be an accomplished fact.

Those who have travelled by those splendid steamers the *Iona* or *Columbia* from the Clyde *en route* to Oban, will remember Tarbert on Loch Fyne as being the last place of call before the steamer reaches Ardrishaig. Few, however, may be aware that this place of call is within half-an-hour's walking distance of an arm of the Atlantic Ocean. The narrow isthmus of Tarbert is, in fact, only sixteen hundred yards from high-water mark on the Eastern Loch (Loch Fyne) to high-water mark on the Western Loch (Atlantic), and its highest point is only forty-seven feet above the sea. The length of the peninsula of Cantire is forty miles, with a breadth from ten to twelve miles; and the southern extremity, or Mull of Cantire, is only twelve miles from the Irish coast. The steamers that sail from Glasgow to the Western Isles have to encounter the stormy and perilous passage round the dreaded Mull, causing great risk and loss of time, all which, as we have already hinted, would be obviated by the ship-canal at Tarbert. East Loch Tarbert, which opens on to Loch Fyne, is distant forty-four miles from Greenock. Its small harbour, about a mile in length, is very commodious and landlocked, having at its farther end the town of Tarbert, with large quays, so that vessels can approach the shore in deep water. At present, horsed vehicles take passengers and goods from the steamer in the East Loch, to the pier at the head of the West Loch, where the Islay steamer will convey them to Port Ellen. The West Loch is an arm of the Atlantic, eleven

miles in length, and about a mile in width, with a clear channel nearly to its head, for vessels drawing eighteen feet of water. The island of Gigha protects the entrance of the Loch from south-west gales; and the silvan scenery of this Loch is in fine contrast to the rugged rocks of the Eastern Loch.

The wonder is that the Tarbert Ship-canal was not made many years ago, its advantages being so obvious, and its construction having been demonstrated to be both practicable and paying. The low ground to be cut through consists chiefly of micaceous schist covered with moss; and as the water on each side is landlocked and sheltered, the operations in cutting the canal will not be subjected to risk from tidal waves. The engineering difficulties are thus by no means formidable. A century and a quarter ago, the project for a ship-canal at this place was seriously debated. The celebrated James Watt was requested to examine and report upon the project; and, on December 21, 1771, he sent in a statement to the Commissioners of Highland Roads and Bridges, giving his views of the feasibility of the undertaking, and handing in two estimates, the one for a canal sixteen feet deep at neap-tides high-water, to cost—according to the curiously minute estimates furnished—one hundred and twenty thousand seven hundred and eighty-nine pounds nine shillings and fivepence; the other for a canal twelve feet deep, to cost seventy-three thousand eight hundred and forty-nine pounds two shillings and ninepence. Neither of these plans was accepted; but, through the powerful influence of John, Duke of Argyll, and the Marquis of Breadalbane, the shallow Crinan Canal, farther north, was commenced in 1793 by Sir John Rennie, assisted by Captain Joseph Huddart.

The non-eligibility of the Crinan Canal, as a means of transit for vessels of deep draught, redirected attention to the isthmus of Tarbert; and, in 1846, an Act of Parliament was obtained by a joint-stock Company to make a ship-canal at Tarbert, that should be fifty-six feet wide, and have a depth of eighteen feet at low-water. Mr Gibb, of Aberdeen, was the engineer; and he estimated the expense at one hundred and forty-seven thousand nine hundred and fifty pounds; which included the deepening of the West Loch, the improvement of the Eastern Harbour, and the erection of two lighthouses. The Company, however, was dissolved; and Mr Gibb's plans were not carried out. In the following year, 1847, Captain Sir Edward Belcher, R.N., and Lieut.-colonel P. Yule, R.E., were specially appointed by government to examine and report on the merits of the proposed Canal, and their opinions were most favourable to the project. Lieut.-colonel Yule's estimate of the expense was a little over one hundred thousand pounds sterling; and he concluded his Report with these words: 'When a work of this nature, formed in a rock by mere force of labour, is once completed, it will be liable to no accidents; it will not require science to execute it, nor much money to keep it up; the lock-gates and their pliers alone will be liable to deterioration by time.' Sir Edward Belcher afforded most valuable testimony to the great importance of the Tarbert Canal in the naval defence of Great Britain. He said: 'In a military point of view,

this channel affords most important advantages to the naval defence of the western ports of Scotland. In the event of war, some naval rendezvous, as well as coal depôt, must be formed in the neighbourhood of the Clyde. The enemy would, doubtless, have cruisers watching the Glasgow, as well as the Irish trade. We will suppose the enemy's cruisers caught by a westerly gale between Ireland and the Mull of Cantire, and that the fact of his being there is conveyed to our cruisers in the Clyde; before any of our steamers could reach or pass the Mull of Cantire, even if she could face the gale as well as the sea, she might, by adopting the Tarbert Channel, pass with ease, in smooth water, to the southern point of Islay, in a state of efficiency, seek the enemy to leeward, and prevent escape; or, should her services be required on the northern coast of Ireland, her arrival by this route would be certain, when it might be impolitic, if not impossible, to attempt it from the Clyde direct.'

In the Report of the Tidal Harbours Commission for 1847, the advantages to be derived from the Tarbert Ship-canal are summed up in most favourable terms. 'There may be some difficulty arising from the difference of the levels of the tide on the east and west sides of the peninsula, said to amount at times to twelve feet, which it is proposed to guard against by placing a pair of flood-gates at each end; but it is to be hoped, when the work comes to be carried out, no practical obstacle will be found in making a thorough open cut, and that it will be wide enough and deep enough to admit, at all times of the tide, the largest war-steamer or the heaviest merchant-vessel, that either can now, or will in future, ascend the Clyde to Glasgow Quay. In the eastern part of Scotland, large sums of public money have been expended upon roads and bridges; and the testimony of all observant persons is unanimous as to the advance in civilisation, in comfort, and in wealth that has immediately followed in the wake of such improvements. But in the western districts of Scotland, and especially in the county of Argyll, the rivers, lakes, and sea are now the means of intercourse; and the very barrier that mainly prevented communication in the days of our fathers, has proved to be the great highway in our own. Steamboats are at once the heralds and the cause of every kind of improvement in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Independent, then, of the advantages of such a communication in a military point of view, every facility that can be given to uninterrupted intercourse, and thereby to the spread of civilisation, cannot but be hailed as a national benefit.'

The project of the Tarbert Ship-canal, however, again slumbered for several years; till 1861, when Mr John Ramsay, of Port Ellen, Islay, read a paper before the British Association on 'The Proposed Canal at Loch Tarbert, Argyllshire.' He spoke of it as being advantageous from every point of view; and said that 'it would, in effect, bring the numerous western islands and all the west coast of Scotland north of Cantire, sixty miles nearer to the markets to which all their produce is conveyed, besides avoiding a voyage round one of the most dangerous headlands, through the most

tempestuous sea which can be encountered anywhere on the coast of Great Britain.' A meeting of West Highland proprietors was held at Salen, in Mull, on July 19, 1861, when this revived project of the Tarbert Canal was most favourably discussed. Nothing practical, however, came of the meeting. A railway was also projected to cross the isthmus; but this also has not been carried out, though telegraph wires were taken across some fifteen years ago.

It does not appear, therefore, from the various testimonies here quoted, that there would be any special practical difficulty to be surmounted in cutting a ship-canal through the narrow Tarbert isthmus, and thus bringing the Clyde into an easier, shorter, and safer connection with the north-west of Scotland than can now be obtained by 'rounding wild Cantire.' Those words from *The Lord of the Isles*, remind us of Bruce's boat-carrying over the Tarbert isthmus, in which he imitated Magnus Barefoot, and in which example he has been followed by many herring-fishers, who have hauled their boats over the dry land to escape the perils by water at the Mull. In fact, by the aid of laying down poles for their keels to pass over, various craft have been dragged across the isthmus.

Let us hope that the Tarbert Ship-canal will speedily pass from the shadowy realms of project into an actual and accomplished fact.

### MY NEW FRIEND.

#### IN FOUR CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER III.

As the reader may suppose, I was in feverish expectation of a summons to wait upon Messrs Bunner, Wreggs, and Carrowle—the firm for which Mr Scate was acting—hour by hour, almost minute by minute; but the business took a very different turn. Mr Scate called one day, out of the time at which he usually paid his visits, which was generally in the evening, and said that the firm would not trouble me to call; they were quite satisfied, he said, with what they had heard from him; and not caring to multiply the agents with whom they dealt directly, preferred to consider my transactions as a branch of his own. This being the case, he would at once, if I were agreeable, commence our joint work by either seeing people at my house himself, or making appointments to which I should attend.

I could have no possible objection to this, beyond the grave one that I had no experience in buying and selling, and did not even know what kind of goods I was expected to examine. To all this he had conclusive answers. A man 'with his head screwed on the right way,' as mine was, would have no difficulty in picking up such knowledge; while at first he would see everything right for me, and when he was obliged to be away, would leave me instructions how far to go in any purchase. But there! it was making mountains of molehills to talk in that strain. Several interviews of this kind took place; and I could not help thinking that Scate took care never to hold them in the presence of Mr Chelms; and I sometimes actually thought he must lie in wait in the neighbourhood to see the old gentleman go out, so promptly did he look in directly afterwards.

But Mr Chelms was so interested in the matter, so anxious for actual work to begin, he said, that he generally extracted a pretty full account from me; besides holding long conversations on his own prospective share with Mr Scate.

Among other preparations for the agency, Mr Scate had some office furniture brought in; so that, what with a massive table and desk, half-a-dozen heavy chairs, with various racks and shelves fitted on the walls, my front parlour assumed quite a solid, banking, or life-assurance aspect, which met the approval not only of Mr Scate, but of Mr Chelms.

The first transaction which was completed in the new office, took place very suddenly—to me; and was surprising by its brevity and various special features, common perhaps to my novel business, but altogether different from my previous experience. It was conducted thus. At twilight one evening, only a few days after the subject was first broached, for Mr Scate would lose no time in the matter, he came in, and repaired to the office. He had not been there five minutes, when a man knocked at our door and asked for him. It so happened that I opened the door to this person, who, in the few words he spoke, seemed to have an unpleasantly furtive way with him; and although not disguised in any particular manner, his hat was so slouched over his brows, and the collar of his coat so pulled up, that it was impossible to distinguish his features clearly. I showed him into the office, and went down-stairs. As I did so, I thought for an instant that I caught sight of Mr Chelms's face, in the dusky gloom of the staircase, peering over the banisters. I paused to look again; but no one was there, and I went on.

In a few minutes Mr Scate called down the speaking-tube which he had caused to be carried from the office to our sitting-room, and asked me to step up. I complied, and found him with the stranger I had previously admitted; but their figures were barely discernible, as they were sitting without a light, and the twilight had now almost changed to darkness. I naturally noticed this, and offered to procure a light.

'No, thank ye,' returned Mr Scate. 'Our business is finished, and I am going out directly. I wished to introduce you to this gentleman, who will be here again to-morrow, or the next night, and will transact some business with you. Mr—a—Mr'—

'Jerry Wilkins, you know,' said the other, as Scate hesitated.

'To be sure!—of course!' exclaimed the latter. 'Mr Wilkins, this is our new agent, Mr Matley, who will carry on the business at this branch for the present; so you will know who to ask for when I am not here.'

'Yes; I shall know him,' returned the stranger. His words were not a direct reply to Mr Scate's remark, and although I could scarcely see him in the darkness, I felt he was eyeing me narrowly. However, there was little time for this or anything more, as Scate rose from his seat, and in a few words intimated that our business was concluded.

I opened the door for them, and they went out, not exactly together, for Mr Wilkins left at once, while Scate lingered for a couple of minutes on the threshold with me, although he



seemed to have nothing particular to say. As I closed the door, I again thought I saw Mr Chelms, this time at the farther end of our little entrance hall; but it was very dark there, and I might easily have been mistaken. I at once lighted the gas, and went down to our breakfast-room, where I found the old gentleman calmly smoking his pipe in the dark, and by himself; for Susan was absent, making some trifling purchases in the neighbourhood.

I apologised for his not having a light; but, in his usual cheerful manner, he said it was of no consequence, as he liked to sit and smoke in a half-dreamy state, to which twilight, or even darkness, was very favourable. He was chatty on other subjects, but, for a wonder, did not refer to business, which, indeed, was not spoken of until my wife returned. She had gone out just after I had admitted Mr Jerry Wilkins, and so naturally asked me who the visitor was. But even while I told her, Mr Chelms was too much engrossed by his pipe to pay any attention to the subject, or at anyrate to join in the conversation.

Though on various occasions Mr Chelms indulged in a glass or two of grog, it is only right I should say that he never, even at first, gave us the idea that he was an intemperate man. He certainly seemed led away a little by the example of Scate, who occasionally took, we thought, a malicious pleasure in tempting the old gentleman. We did not and could not like Scate, while we both felt favourably disposed to our lodger from the beginning.

The next day Scate came early, and had a brief interview with me in the office. His object was to say that Mr Wilkins would probably call that night, and if so, would bring a parcel, of which I was to take charge, and for which I was to give him forty-five pounds. This money he gave me, all in gold.

'Am I to examine or check the goods?' I began.

'O no,' he said; 'it is all settled about them. We know Jerry, and have done many bits of business with him, so we can trust him.'

'Will you give me a receipt for him to sign,' I asked, 'or will he draw one up?'

'Receipts don't signify between people who can trust each other,' he replied.

'Why, you do not mean to say you are going to pay all this money without a receipt?' I exclaimed in amazement; for such a proceeding was horribly opposed to all my experience.

'Yes, with Jerry,' he returned carelessly; 'it's our way. You will get into it soon, old fellow, and when you come to know your customers, you will deal with them accordingly. By-the-by, you may let old Chelms know that you have begun business; you may show him the money, to let him see that it's a real thing; but don't let him be in the room when you pay Wilkins. In fact, he had better not see Wilkins at all.' All this was odd; but as I knew literally nothing of the business as yet, or how the unseen firm conducted it, I could not say anything against it.

Mr Scate added one piece of information this day which was welcome. He said that my engagement would be considered to commence from this date; that a rent would be paid for

the use of my office, the amount of which would depend upon his report; and upon his report also, to be sent in at the end of four weeks—when I should be introduced to the firm—it would depend whether I was paid by salary or commission. 'And you may rely upon my report saying the best it can for you, old fellow,' he continued. 'I could have got this settled at once; but I know what our principals are, and I am confident that to wait a bit will make a difference of fifty pounds a year to you; so you can draw on me for five, or ten if you choose, while the month runs on, and pay me at your leisure.'

It was impossible not to feel grateful to a man who did so much for a stranger, and who was so perfectly disinterested; yet—although I hated myself for allowing such a feeling to exist—I was conscious, even while I was thanking Scate, and thanking him sincerely—I was conscious, I say, that I was gradually growing almost to detest the man, my benefactor though he was.

Scate did not come in again that day; and I took the first opportunity of telling Mr Chelms what my instructions were; showed him the money, as suggested; told him that I was now fairly in the employ of the firm; that I was to be introduced to them in four weeks' time, and that my pay would be settled on such a scale as the report of Mr Scate justified. He asked me, after a moment's reflection, what the address of the firm was. I told him that I had asked the same question of Scate, who had replied, that I had better postpone all inquiries till the month was over; they would prefer it.

'Ah, I see,' said the old gentleman. 'Until that time, you are, as one may say, on probation. Very cautious of them, very, not to allow Mr Scate even to reveal their address till then.—But I like them all the better for it, sir; I do, indeed. Now, if I get my money in a few days, I may hope—as Mr Scate holds out the most favourable expectations to me—to be introduced at the same time as yourself. I should like that, because, of course, I should not invest without knowing something of the people, no matter how high my opinion of Mr Scate might be.'

I agreed with the old gentleman that he was quite right in this.

A man went by with plants in a barrow that afternoon, and Mr Chelms declaring—rather to my surprise—that he was an enthusiastic admirer of flowers, bought a number, which he told Mrs Matley—who really was fond of them—he would plant in the front garden after the sun went down. He was as good as his word too, or nearly; for he went into the garden with spade and water-can, and slowly—for it was plain he was not an expert gardener—commenced his work. I offered to help him; but the old gentleman said that half his pleasure in shrubs and flowers would be lost unless he planted them himself; so he went on until it was almost dark, making, however, but little progress.

It was between twilight and dark when a cab stopped at our gate, and a knock following, I went to the door, expecting to find—as it proved—Mr Jerry Wilkins. I had lost no time in answering the knock; but Mr Chelms was already in conversation with the visitor, and inviting him, as I could hear, to admire some beautiful

bulbs he was holding out for his inspection. Mr Wilkins, who had struck me as being of a somewhat morose turn when I admitted him on the previous evening, looked gloomier and sulkier now. He turned with a very uncivil grunt from the garrulous old gentleman, and came in the moment I opened the door. Mr Chelms, however, smiled with imperturbable good-humour, but, as it was too dark to see any longer, gave up his gardening for the night.

'You are not an enthusiast in flowers, Mr Wilkins,' I began. 'I am afraid you did not see any particular beauty in the bulb which Mr Chelms so greatly admires.'

'Beauty, no!' said Mr Wilkins. 'What do I want with a thing as looks as if it was pulled out of a rope of onions; and very likely was. He's an old fool. And yet Ned Scate is going to do business with him, isn't he?'

I could make no reply for the moment, the man's vulgar familiarity, and his knowledge of Scate's plans, so thoroughly staggered me.

'But a regular fool will suit Ned Scate better than anything else, especially if he has a good opinion of himself,' continued Mr Wilkins not heeding my silence.—'Well, governor, there's the stuff, and I want five-and-forty pounds of you.'

'Yes,' I said; 'Mr Scate told me I was to give you forty-five pounds; and as for a receipt'—

'Well, then, hand over the cash, and let me step it,' interrupted the man. 'What's the use of keeping the cab at the door? Ned Scate never told you to ask for a receipt, I know.' A moment's pause here, while he rapidly ran over the gold. 'All right, governor. Will you come to the corner and have a glass?—You won't? Well, that's your business. Mine is to clear out; so good-night.' Saying this, he went, leaving me with a growing feeling of dislike to the 'agency,' with which indeed I had never been greatly enamoured.

Mr Chelms, who, as he explained, had gone out for a short stroll, returned soon after Wilkins left, and joining Mrs Matley and myself, began what promised to be a long, as it was certainly an unconnected account of his gardening experiences in the country; but ere he was fairly in the midst of his narrative, a knock at the street door was heard; and, to my astonishment, Lizzie brought down a message to the effect that a gentleman wished to see me at the *Three Bells*, a tavern in the next street. It immediately occurred to me that it must be that dreadful Wilkins, who wished to transact some fresh piece of the most irregular business in which I was engaged, and this was perhaps his way of managing it. I hurried off accordingly, Mr Chelms saying he would smoke a pipe in the front garden until I came back, so that he should be out of the way while Mrs Matley and Lizzie prepared the supper.

I hastened away, as I have said, and went into each compartment of the bar at the *Three Bells*, which was a large place, without seeing Wilkins or any one that I knew. On my looking for the second or third time into the most select division, where I had naturally expected to find him, a big, square-built man, a customer who was leaning against the bar, said civilly: 'Are you looking for anybody, sir?'

It occurred to me that this after all might be the sender of the message, so at a venture, I replied: 'Yes; I am indeed looking for some one; but the awkward part of it is that I do not know who I am looking for. A lad came to my house, and said a gentleman wished to see me here; but I think there must have been some mistake.'

'I am sure there is!' exclaimed the stranger. 'What a pity it is you cannot get the simplest thing done in a straightforward manner. I sent a boy with that message to an old acquaintance.—May I ask where you live, sir?'

'No. 9 Victoria Louisa Terrace,' I replied.

'The young idiot!' said the stranger. 'I told him a totally different number. It is evidently through me you have been brought here, sir; and though I did not come myself, I must apologise for the utter stupidity of my messenger. You must have a glass of something with me.'

I tried to decline this; but the stranger was clearly one of those who think nothing is complete until ratified by the wine-pledge, or what serves in modern life for the wine-pledge; so I had to stay and assure him of my completely excusing him, and listen to his repeated apologies over a glass of ale, before I could get away.

I found Mr Chelms leaning over the gate, and smoking tranquilly. When I told him of my adventures, the old gentleman laughed heartily. I thought business was concluded for that evening; but at the very last moment, just indeed as we were going to bed, Scate came in for the parcel left by Mr Jerry Wilkins. I went with him into the office, where I experienced a momentary 'turn' by not being able to lay my hand upon the packet in the dark, which I made sure I could have done. On procuring a light, however, I found I had merely made the mistake of supposing that the parcel was on a chair to the right of the door, when in reality it was upon one to the left.

'I shall be round early to-morrow,' said Mr Scate, 'as, since I saw you, I have had a foreign letter, which you must answer. It is from Belgium, and will lead to a great deal of business. You understand French, I believe?'

I said I had a fair knowledge of that language.

'That's a good job,' continued Scate. 'It has been a staggerer to me over and over again, the not knowing anything of the *parlyvoos* jargon. This will be a big transaction, you will find.—And I say, Matley!'—this exclamation was uttered just as he reached the door, as if it were a sudden thought—'just sound old Chelms about his money. If he can get it in two or three days, it will be just in time to make such a profit for him as he never got in Australia, or wherever he has been. Tell him *that*; and tell him that afterwards it may be too late. I will come round and see him myself as well.'

He went rapidly away with the parcel; and I had a long talk with my wife, before I went to sleep that night, upon the singular features of the employment on which I had entered; and we half decided that unless I saw the principals at the end of the month, and liked them when I did see them, I would not continue the engagement.

I spoke to Mr Chelms in the morning, as desired

about his investment; and the old gentleman seemed anxious not to lose the promised chance, and said that perhaps, by sacrificing a trifle of interest, he might get his money a day or two earlier than agreed, which would be in about a week later. Perhaps Mr Scate could show him a way out of the difficulty. But it was not likely that he should give up all this money without an introduction to the firm, and being well satisfied of their stability, or, in lieu of this, some tangible security meanwhile.

As soon as Mr Scate came, I told him this. He declared he greatly applauded the old gentleman's caution, and asked me to call him down, that we might talk things over. I did so; and Mr Chelps came at once.

'You are naturally desirous of knowing where you put your money, and what it is for, Mr Chelps'—began Scate.

'I am, sir, naturally anxious, as you say,' interposed the old gentleman, feeling for his eyeglass, as he always did when business was the topic of conversation. Securing it at last, he fixed it to his eyes, and looked earnestly, yet with an expression which was ridiculously helpless, at Mr Scate. 'No offence, I hope,' he continued; 'but you see a thousand pounds, or eleven hundred, is a great deal to me; and although I have every confidence in you, yet'—

'No apology, my dear sir,' exclaimed Scate; 'your conduct is strictly business-like, and I will satisfy you. One of my principals, if not two of them, shall wait upon you here, in the first place.'

'Oh, I'm sure I would not trouble them so far,' said Mr Chelps.

But Scate interrupted him, and went on with the same boastful swaggering air: 'They shall come, sir; and you shall arrange then, if you like each other, for a final interview at headquarters. Their references, I may remark, will be to three tolerably well-known establishments—the Bank of England, sir; Baring's, sir; and Rothschild's, sir. Are they good enough?'

'Splendid! Oh! I'm sure,' commenced Mr Chelps; but here his eyeglass fell down, and the interruption gave Scate an opportunity of going on.

'It is possible, Mr Chelps,' he said, 'that the Belgian transaction I have spoken of may be finished before you can arrange with my principals, unless you can have your money at once. In fact, I know this will be the case. Mr Matley, who is luckily a capital French scholar, has written this morning a formal acceptance of these foreigners' terms. They will telegraph to their agent, who will be here on the third day from this with the dock-notes of the goods, which are lying here. I have already seen my principals to-day, and took upon me to say—being anxious to forward your wishes—that I could have your money by that time. Accordingly, as the total required will be sixteen hundred pounds, they handed me five hundred pounds in notes. Here they are.' He pulled out a bulky pocket-book as he said this. 'They are strictly ready-money people, as I told you.'

'What! the Belgians?' exclaimed Chelps, whose eyes sparkled at the sight of the rustling notes. 'And what are their names?'

'I did not mean them exactly,' returned Scate.

'I meant that my people were ready-money men; but so, for the matter of that, are Belgians, especially when they are selling anything. Their names are Delroi, Vianet, and Company. You may have heard of them?'

'Yes; I think I have heard of them,' said Chelps. 'And are all those bank-notes?' His interest in the Belgian firm was evidently small compared with his interest in bank-notes, from which he had never taken his eyes since Scate produced them.

'Yes; fifty tens. Look at 'em!' replied the latter, passing the notes towards the old gentleman, and once again shaking down the eyeglass. 'Well, sir,' continued Scate after a moment's pause, during which the notes had been handed back again, 'you shall have the delivery-order of these goods as security, until you are quite satisfied about my principals; and that is exactly equal to giving you five hundred pounds of their money to hold without any security at all.'

'So it is—so it is!' chuckled Chelps. 'Nothing could be better. I will go into the City, sir, and sell out to-day. My broker will let me have the money in advance if I like. Oh, I can manage all that; and I shall be quite satisfied, especially if I can see one of the firm; I must own I should like that.'

'You shall do so, sir,' answered Scate. 'One of them shall be here to see the completion of the transaction. He will like to do so, being Mr Matley's first piece of business on their account. Then, sir, in his presence, I will give you the dock-warrants, and you will give me eleven hundred pounds. I may say, as between friends, that these things are already as good as sold for two thousand pounds. There's business, sir. Our firm knows where to plant the articles.'

'My dear sir,' exclaimed Chelps, 'it's as good as done. If I had any doubts before, what you now say, and the sight of those notes, have quite removed them, and I shall not be easy now until I have had the pleasure of seeing you and your friend together.'

Mr Scate shook his hand heartily, restored the notes to his pocket-book, took the letter I had written; and then, after a most expressive wink at me, which implied anything but respect for his new partner, he left.

#### AN AFRICAN ADVENTURE.

Of all the various races of the west coast of Africa, the Boobies, or natives of the beautiful, but to Europeans, fatal island of Fernando Po, in the Gulf of Benin, are among the most remarkable, on account of the difference in the appearance, habits, and manners of these people from those of the races or tribes of the adjacent mainland. Finely formed, with, as a general rule, not strongly marked African-negro features, they voluntarily disfigure—or ornament themselves?—by tattooing on their approach towards manhood—not with the regular lines and figures with which the South Sea Islanders and others adorn their persons, but with deep hideous gashes, which open widely, and leave frightful cicatrices on their faces and breasts. It would appear that those who are most deeply marked with this hideous

tattooing are regarded with the greatest respect by the people of the tribe; and though they seem to live on terms of perfect social equality, it is probable that this disfigurement is in some degree a sign of chieftainship.

In one respect, however, these strange people are less civilised than any other negro race, inasmuch as they go absolutely destitute of clothing. They will sometimes wear old garments, given to them by sailors or others, especially if these garments be showy, but only as an occasional adornment which is irksome to them. The only article of apparel that is constantly worn is a hat, or rather a flat, circular piece of grass-matting, like the crown of a hat, but of larger circumference, which is fixed on the top of their woolly heads, to keep off the fierce rays of the sun. As a substitute for clothing, however, the Boobies—male and female—habitually cover their bodies from head to foot with palm-oil, coloured with a kind of red ochre, which abounds on the island, and which stains the skin, and even the woolly hair, of a bright yellowish red or bronze colour, and gives them the appearance, when standing motionless a short distance off, of so many bronze statues. It also serves the purpose of keeping off the mosquitoes and sand-flies and other venomous insects.

Fernando Po is an earthly paradise to look upon; and though fever is prevalent and often fatal in the settlement of Clarence, the interior, where the native villages are generally situated, is said to be healthy. The island, which is nearly circular, is about thirty miles in diameter, and densely wooded from its shores to the lofty mountain—between seven and eight thousand feet in height, according to estimate—which rises in its centre.

One day, while our ship was at anchor in Clarence Bay, a party of seven or eight was formed by the second-lieutenant, to visit the interior, and penetrate, if possible, to the foot of the mountain. The present writer was one of the party, and we set forth early in the morning immediately after breakfast. There was little difficulty about travelling in mid-day, for our journey would lead us through a dense forest, almost impervious to the sun's rays, the whole distance we purposed to travel. We were recommended to arm ourselves, in case any difficulty should arise, and most of us carried a revolver, concealed of course. We were curious to see the habitations of the natives; for though there were a few negro huts of the ordinary description in the vicinity of the settlement, these were chiefly inhabited by coast negroes, who had taken up their abode on the island, and were hangers-on upon the white residents. The Boobie villages were all in the interior, and we had been told that they were curiosities in their way. It was in the direction of one of the most populous villages that we set forth, plunging into the wood as soon as we quitted the settlement.

Nothing remarkable occurred during the journey, except that we passed several enormous trees of the mahogany species, and saw a few small monkeys, which clung by their tails to the branches of the trees, and swinging to and fro, chattered volubly as we passed beneath them. Neither did we meet a single negro until we

had journeyed three or four miles, when we came upon a party of young men collecting palm-wine in the palm-trees, from which, when they perceived us approaching, they descended with incredible and, as it appeared to us, dangerous swiftness, and scampered off, hallooing to one another, in the direction of the village.

As we walked slowly, it was near mid-day before we approached the base of the mountain; and very soon the chattering of many voices told us that we were near the village. However, we kept on following the direction of the voices, and in a few minutes saw a party of eighteen or twenty men, who came towards us, headed by a man bent with years, who leaned heavily upon a stout stick as he walked. The young men who had run away on seeing us, had no doubt carried the news of our approach to the people of the village; and this deputation, headed by the venerable senior, had come forth to ascertain the object of our visit.

We were in somewhat of a dilemma. None of us could speak a word of the Boobie language; nor could any of the negroes on board, or we should have brought one of them to serve as an interpreter; and except a certain formula of words, which they had learned from the sailors, and which it is unnecessary to repeat—though the old man and some of the others uttered them over and over again, evidently thinking they were greeting us most politely—the deputation knew nothing of English. It was ludicrous to see the poor fellows bowing, and waving their hands in token of amity—evidently doubtful of our object in coming to their village, and deprecating any unfriendly act on our part—and at the same time swearing at us in most approved nautical formula, until the second-lieutenant, smiling, shook hands with the old man and swore at him in return; upon which a general shaking of hands and swearing ensued, and the party seemed satisfied that we had no evil intent in visiting them.

The old man then issued some orders; and several boys appeared, bringing palm-wine in gourds, with cocoa-nut cups to drink it from, and bananas and plantains and other fruits, which they pressed upon our acceptance. We, however, wished to enter the village, which, as we perceived by advancing a few steps, was close to us, and consisted of some dozen small low huts, and a vast number of the large but light bark canoes, suspended, bottom upwards, from tree to tree, beneath which some old men were squatted. We could see neither women nor children, though, when we first drew near, we could distinctly hear their shrill voices in loud outcry. They had apparently taken alarm at our approach; and the men were evidently so unwilling that we should enter their village, though they did not offer to use force to prevent us from so doing, that as we had no desire to offend their prejudices, and, moreover, as we could see all that was to be seen from where we stood, we gave way, and sat ourselves down to rest and partake of the refreshments they had provided. They seemed pleased at this; and after resting awhile, we took our departure, with a mutual exchange of the formula with which our friends had greeted our arrival, leaving the



old man and one or two others, who appeared to possess some authority, highly delighted with a present of old cotton handkerchiefs, a few small silver coins, and a few 'hands' of leaf-tobacco. We returned to the sloop-of-war shortly before dark, and had hardly set foot on board when we saw a double-banked war-canoë approaching the ship from the mainland.

This was an unexpected visit. The 'double-banked canoes' are formed of two huge trunks of trees—generally a species of mahogany—carefully and neatly hollowed out, until the shell, though of great strength, is often thinner than the sides of an ordinary boat. The outsides as well as the insides are smoothed and polished with palm-oil mixed with some pigment; and the hollowing is so contrived that the bow and stern of each canoe are much higher than the centre. The stern and bows are also elaborately carved, the former especially; and the two canoes are then bound firmly together, so that it is almost impossible to capsize them in the roughest sea. The paddlers, from twenty to forty in number, squat cross-legged on the bottom of the canoes, there being no stretchers, except across and around the stern; and the paddles are shaped like small spades, with short handles. Rapidly wielded, with short quick strokes or dips, the paddlers chanting some monotonous song the while, these canoes are forced swiftly over the water. But they are never used except by some high chief going to war or on some important mission.

There were two figures clothed in white in the stern of this canoe, both evidently chiefs, although we had no idea to what race or tribe they belonged, or what was their object in visiting the sloop-of-war. A few minutes, however, brought the canoe alongside, and the chiefs ascended to the ship's deck. Both were tall stout men, and they really presented an imposing appearance in their ample white robes. Our visitors were of a jet-black complexion, their skins shining like polished ebony. Both were good-looking negroes. He who appeared to have chief authority wore a short beard, and his nose, though the nostrils were distended, was slightly aquiline. Their long white calico robes, worn somewhat in the style of a Scotch plaid, reached to the calves of their legs behind, but left the right knee bare in front, while the robe descended a few inches below the left knee. It was doubled across the breast, and one end was thrown gracefully over the left shoulder; and though it had no sleeves in reality, it was so arranged that the arms, bare to the elbows, seemed to be thrust through wide bishop-sleeves, which hung drooping at their sides. Both wore a white head-dress, somewhat resembling a Turkish turban, with a long and flowing flap behind, to shade the sun from the neck. The headman's turban was larger than that of his companion, and more profusely ornamented with gold spangles and strings of cowrie-shells; but each wore heavy gold bracelets and anklets, and a crooked sword or scimitar, without a sheath, attached to a belt round the waist. Their feet and legs below the knees were bare; and as they stood erect—the shorter of the two at least six feet in height—they presented both a stately and graceful appearance.

The chief who spoke English, after saluting

the captain and officers, explained that they had come from the coast to the northward, pointing in that direction, and mentioning some unpronounceable name.

'Me, de king broder,' he went on. 'De king good fren' to Queen Victoria [this name he pronounced correctly]; king and queen should be good fren'—dat berry good ting. Den no war. Ebery ting go right. Queen Victoria say hab no mo' slabe. Send him ship for catchem slabe-ship. Makee custom to coast-king for no sell slabe to bad white fellar. Dat berry good too. But bad king, he takee custom, sell slabe all same. Dat no good. Dis berry time, on de coast dar, t'oder side ob de Cape [meaning Cape Biafra], two ships go takee slabe on board, what king go for sell. Messenger come across for tell de king, my broder. S'pose man-o'-war ship go, makee quick time, den dey catch him bo't—all right.'

The chief mentioned the names of the tribe and king to whom he alluded; but I have forgotten both. Our captain, however, was doubtful whether to act upon such intelligence. That it was true, he thought, was very probable; and it was well known that from no love of Queen Victoria, but from hatred and jealousy of one another, the kings and chiefs of one tribe would inform against another, with the treble object of gratifying their own animosity, affecting a regard for her Britannic Majesty and the treaty, and reaping a reward for the information in case a capture should be made.

It was certainly a great object to capture two slavers; and that the slavers were on the coast there was little doubt. The question was, in the first place, whether we should be able to find them—the geographical knowledge of the natives not being very accurate, and whether they would not be off before we could arrive at the designated spot; and in the second place, whether it might not be a ruse to draw us off from the station, that the king and chiefs who professed so much friendship for Queen Victoria, might meanwhile play a little game to their own advantage; such tricks being by no means unfrequent.

'Can I be sure that you are telling me the truth?' said the captain. 'And can I find the river of which you speak, from the vague description you have given, if your information be correct?'

'Tis de truf, sah, captain,' replied the chief. 'Me makee know de coast right well, s'pose me see him.'

'Then you will act as our pilot, and get good "custom," suppose we make a capture?'

Somewhat to our surprise, the chief readily offered to stay on board and pilot the ship, or rather point out the river in which the slavers lay, when the ship should arrive off that part of the coast.

Still suspecting some trick from this very promptness, and thinking it possible that, after all, the chief who had not spoken might be the real headman and the king's brother, the captain insisted that both the chiefs should remain on board, he promising to bring them back again to Fernando Po. This, after some little hesitation, they agreed to; and no longer doubtful, the captain ordered the anchor to be weighed and

sail set immediately. The chiefs gave some orders to their own people, and the canoe was paddled away; and in less than half an hour the ship was under full sail, standing out of the Bay before the land-breeze.

Shortly before dark the next day, we reached the spot indicated by the chief, who pointed out the entrance of a narrow winding river, in which, he said, the messenger who had crossed overland, declared that the slavers were lying. It was necessary to cut the vessels out by means of a night-attack with boats, or to await their coming out of the river and capture them; but then, in the latter case, they would be sure to hear of our presence, and to come out without slaves, and probably laden with some trifling cargo, like honest traders, in which case we could do nothing with them; so, though the former plan was hazardous, it was decided upon.

As soon as darkness set fairly in, the pinnace and first-cutter were armed and manned and despatched up the river, one of the chiefs accompanying each boat. The river was very winding, and so narrow that there was often hardly room to pull the oars. It was evident that the vessels must be small and of light draught, and must have been towed up the river, if they were really there, which we began to doubt. The night was very dark. The shores were marshy in some places, in others lined with dense forest, and as we pulled silently along, the muffled oars making no noise, and no one speaking, save when the officers gave some order in a scarcely audible whisper, while the night-wind sighed mournfully amidst the trees, the scene was dismal enough. For a full hour we had pulled in this fashion, hoping, at every fresh bend in the river, to discover the vessels of which we were in search, yet seeing nothing; and at last the officer in command was inclined to return.

'They have never been here, or they are gone,' he whispered.

'Pull lilly bit more, sah, you catch 'em,' replied the chief.

'I think I see a vessel's masts, sir—there, just against that streak of light in the sky,' whispered the bow-oar's-man, who had been ordered to look out.

'Yes; it is so,' answered the lieutenant.—'Now, my lads, have your pistols ready; but don't fire, unless we are fired upon. Be ready with your cutlasses. The vessels lie in the next bend. We'll pull softly round, and then dash alongside.'

The cutter was in the rear. The pinnace lay by till she came up, and the same orders were repeated to the officer in charge.

Silently we pulled round the point. Every man held his breath, though he panted with excitement. Five minutes more, and we descried the hulls and spars of two long low schooners, scarcely a hundred yards before us. The boats appeared to be unseen and unheard.

'They don't see or hear us,' whispered the lieutenant. 'We'll pull softly up, and board them in the dark. They've no idea that there's a man-of-war on the coast, and we will catch the scoundrels sleeping.'

We were not fifty yards from the vessels, which lay side by side, in a sort of basin in the river, which widened in this spot to a breadth of

forty or fifty yards. The stars had made their appearance in the hitherto gloomy sky, and we could clearly discern the slave pens and huts on shore.

'Hist! hark! What is that?' whispered the lieutenant. 'By Jove! they see us! Look! There is a light on board the starboard vessel. On, my lads! Dash in, with a cheer!' he cried aloud. 'Huzza for prize-money!'

Hardly had he spoken the words, when there came a blinding flash, followed by the simultaneous report of at least a dozen muskets. We heard the bullets plash in the water, like heavy rain; but no one appeared to have been hit.

'On, my lads! No secrecy now. No quarter till they surrender!' cried the lieutenant.

In a few moments both boats were alongside the schooners, and the sailors sprang, cutlass in hand, on to their decks.

'Surrender, in the Queen's name!' cried the lieutenant in command.

'We surrender!' answered a voice, in broken English, which, however, to my fancy, had a very Yankified accent. There was no further attempt at resistance, which, in fact, had been madness, for they well knew the boats would not have made the attack unless they were well supported outside, and resistance to a ship-of-war was punishable by death, while otherwise, the vessels only would be seized.

The prizes were ours; and they were sent to St Helena for adjudication, where they were very profitably sold for the benefit of the captors. The slaves, four hundred and thirty in number, were in the pens on shore, and they were sent to Liberia, and there released, to become denizens of that then new republic.

'How dared you fire at Her Majesty's boats at all?' demanded the lieutenant.

'It was not I, but the fool of an officer on deck,' replied the captain, who, though I veritably believe he was an American, professed to be a Portuguese.

'Lucky for you, no harm was done,' was the reply.

There *was* mischief done, however, though at the time no one was aware of it. It was determined to send one boat back to the ship, and to keep the other, the pinnace, alongside till daylight, and the crew were ordered out of her. The men had got into the boat again, expecting to return to the ship, and they returned to the schooner, at the command of the officer—all but one. That one was the second chief, who had never stirred from his seat in the pinnace. There he still sat, in his white garb, erect and silent.

'Come up out of the boat!' repeated the officer.

Still the chief never stirred.

'Ask the fellow why he does not come out of the boat!' said the officer to one of the sailors.

The man shook him roughly by the shoulder, and told him to mount to the deck. The hitherto erect body fell over on its side.

'Ah, sir, the nigger's shot dead,' said the sailor. 'There's blood runnin' from his breast, and stainin' his white dress.'

'Is it possible?' exclaimed the lieutenant, hastening into the boat.

A very cursory examination told that such

was the case. Conspicuous in his white robe, the poor fellow, who was in the foremost boat, had made a good mark for the men on board the slaver, and a bullet had entered his breast, killing him instantly.

This was the only casualty we met with in capturing the most profitable prize we secured during our cruise; and as it did not befall one of our own men, it was not charged against the captains of the slavers, who got off with the loss of their vessels and all the property on board.

At the earnest request of the head chief, however, who was deeply grieved at the death of his companion, the body was taken on board the ship and sent back to the country to which the unfortunate negro belonged. The sloop-of-war, however, did not return immediately; and the chief, with the reward he had earned and the dead body of his friend, returned home in another vessel.

### SOME MODERN CHANGES.

THAT fashions should constantly alter, is not only an inevitable, but probably a desirable thing; the progressive waves of varying style and usage that are continually passing over everything within the scope of human affairs, from petticoats to politics, are to the world, in preserving it from stagnation, what the tides are to the sea; and however much we may grumble at the eccentricity or extravagance of any prevailing mode, we must remember that habitude makes all things tolerable, and that the fashion which we now dislike to change, and uphold from custom, appeared just as absurd and undesirable to our forerunners, when it superseded something else, as the new one does to us. The consideration of such changes as these, however, not being within the scope of the present paper—it is difficult, indeed, to imagine any paper which would afford scope for them!—we shall glance only at a few of those alterations affecting the minutiae of daily life, which, trifling in themselves, and scarcely appreciable in the individual, when taken as a whole, sometimes serve to mark the strides of civilisation, or even in some instances, the retrogression of nations.

Let us start with that most commonplace object, a tallow-candle—so useful, and yet so vulgar compared with the sperm, ozokerit, stearine, composite, and other beautiful varieties of our own day. Where are the farthing dips and the 'long sixteens' of our youth? Well, we shall breathe no sigh of regret for them; peace be to their ashes, or rather their 'snuffs,' which were malodorous, productive of conflagrations, and exigent of constant trimming. And this last item brings us to the point—where are all the snuffers gone? It is only a few years since the snuffers-tray appeared regularly with the candles at nightfall; now they are never seen, and ten years hence will be as rare and as valuable as Queen Anne's farthings, unless some specimens are preserved in our museums. As modern candles consume their own wicks, snuffers have become things of the past, and the fact of their

desuetude marks an important epoch in the progress of a great manufacture, which, by its exports and imports, not only visibly affects our revenues, but exercises considerable influence in our commercial relationship with the countries from which tallow was derived.

Who now possesses a tinder-box, or one of the old flare-up dipping-match and bottle arrangements? If there be any such among the readers of this paper, we would say with emphasis: Keep them, and hand them down to your children's children, as an heirloom precious above rubies; for when rubies are manufactured by the pound, and original sculptures of Grecian and Babylonian antiquity supplied wholesale by Birmingham houses at so much a ton, these things will be known only in the dim traditions of our race. Blue-blazing, ill-smelling, sputtering, suffocating phosphorus and sulphur matches, in their red and blue boxes, are rapidly becoming ingulfed in the abyss of forgotten things too. We have read the details of Messrs Bryant and May's manufactory, of their enormous consumption of wood, paper, metal, and other materials, and are not certain that one species of tree is not supposed by botanists to be approaching extinction, owing to the magnitude of their operations! A watch-key will, after a time, become an interesting curiosity, and be transmitted to posterity as evidence of those dark ages when keyless watches were not in universal use. And what—oh, whatever will future generations think of a warming-pan! already at the present day seen only in the hands of the Clown in Christmas pantomimes, and by him employed as a weapon of offence. Let us trust that our descendants may be oblivious of any other purpose which the hideous article could serve, and that a fossil clown with an ancient warming-pan may be dug up somewhere or other for their edification. For, whatever its utility may have been at a bygone period, is not the survival of such an atrocity now an insult to an age of india-rubber, to a land flowing with elastic hot-water bottles, pillows, cushions, and beds—to an era of æsthetic comfort—to the days of well-built houses, well-fitting window-sashes, impermeable roofs, decent drainage, and damp-excluding doors, of bedroom fires, and eider-down quilts?

Great simplification has been effected of late years in our appliances for writing; but there is room for much more. The most ordinary incident of our every-day business, that of writing a letter, is perhaps more cumbrous and complicated in its necessary arrangements than anything else coming within the pale of that civilisation which, like charity, should begin at home. The pen, the penholder, the ink and inkstand, the blotting-paper, the sealing-wax occasionally, and postage-stamp—surely, it is high time that some of these were consigned to the limbo whither the sandbox has already departed, and wafers are fast going. Stylographic pens are a step in the right direction; but perhaps some better kind of indelible pencil than those which already exist would be more fitted to answer the requirements of a caligraphic man.

The snuff-box, with all its historical and classical associations, is doomed, and 'collections' of those articles are even now to be met with in the

possession of people whose particular fancy it is to establish private museums of different things. It is curious to note that the snuff-box, so frequently placed in the hands of their *dramatis personæ* by the playwrights of the last century, and to which they make constant verbal allusion, has but a poor successor in the pipe, cigar, or other accessory of nicotine worship, in the favour of modern writers. The fact is, the use of the box by a skilful actor might be variously rendered playful, cynical, sly, graceful, or statuesque—might, in fact, be employed to interpret many emotions; while the amusing *contretemps* to be extracted from it were innumerable.

Smoking, on the other hand, admits of much fewer phases of expression; and if there is any situation in which the most dignified of mankind appears at a greater disadvantage than when looking in the glass at himself while shaving, it is in the act of lighting a pipe or cigar and squinting at the match. At the same time we can hardly think that the pipe will ever fall out of fashion among smokers, as the medium through which they derive comfort from their favourite weed; though great changes in form and material may take place. Cigars, also, it may be remarked, are daily coming into vogue to a greater extent than ever. Nor is this gradual increase confined to England alone. Germany and Turkey consume more cigarettes and cigars every year; and a large exporter of meerschaum from the former country assures us that the trade in expensive pipes has decreased nearly one-half during the last ten years, while wood and clay still hold their ground.

The tobacco-trade, possibly, has more mysteries than any other in this age of commercial immorality. It is almost as difficult to purchase a good cigar promiscuously in Havana as it is in London; unless you know the right shop to go to, you are as likely to buy Whitechapel and Bremen abominations, exported from Europe for the purpose, and put up in the most orthodox 'Habana' boxes. In Vera Cruz, you may buy cigars for five shillings a hundred, which the vendors for a few cents extra will pack and label with the name of some famous brand. So they will in Porto Plata or San Domingo. So they used in Brazil; but Bahian and other Brazilian cigars have now made their own name, and have established an honourable claim to be considered amongst the best cheap cigars in the world. It is impossible to get an inexpensive good cigar in Cuba itself; the best brands are never exported, for few people here would care to give half-a-crown or three shillings apiece for their 'smokes,' which the wealthy Cuban—who consumes them soft and green, wrapping them in oiled silk to preserve the flavour—pays on the spot. There is much in a name. Thousands of really excellent weeds are made yearly both in England and Germany from good raw tobacco imported for the purpose; but it would never do to offer them for sale as British or German produce. What a charm lies in the words 'Vuelta Abajo,' to be read on your cigar-boxes! Vuelta Abajo is a small district between Havana and Santiago, consisting of a few acres of land only, now in the possession of two or three of the richest planters in the island; and probably not an atom of the tobacco—noted for its richness—which is grown there finds its way

beyond their own air-tight bladder cigar-pouches, or those of their intimate friends.

Throughout the whole of South and Central America, the Southern States, and in many other parts of the globe, it may safely be averred that the majority of the male population of all classes have a cigarette between their lips during the greater part of their waking existence from childhood upwards. The senator smokes in the Chamber of Debates; the servant smokes as he waits upon you; the shopman does not trouble himself to remove the smouldering rice-paper from his mouth as he answers your queries; the coachman who drives you, the half-clad nigger who blacks your boots, the hunter on the prairie or pampa, and the Indian in the backwoods who rolls his morsel of tobacco in a maize-leaf—all smoke cigarettes. We visited one huge manufactory in Havana which stands out into the bay like an immense mahogany cigar-box itself, where over a million cigarettes are turned out daily. We entered our names in a book, on admission; and when we had completed the tour of the factory, were each presented with an elegant case of cigarettes, every bundle of which bore our respective names, the date, and a complimentary sentence in Spanish, printed in different styles on beautifully embossed labels. There can be no doubt that the introduction of tobacco in this form has greatly increased its consumption in this country. A cigarette is a thing that can be lighted or tossed aside at any time, and often serves to fill up odd intervals of a few minutes; while a pipe, as a rule, demands premeditation, and is indulged in only at regular periods; and a cigar—especially a good one—is rarely commenced by one who can appreciate it, except under circumstances favourable for its full enjoyment and completion.

#### CHILD SONGS—THE LITTLE PRUDE.

HERE she comes, her nut-brown eyes  
Downcast, but sily peeping.  
Oh! beware;  
Such a snare  
Must never find you sleeping.

She puts her finger in a mouth  
Where butter would not melt away,  
With an air  
As if she were  
Much too shy for 'Yea' or 'Nay.'

'How do you do, my little maid?'  
(Her silence is so pretty).  
'To lose your tongue  
Is very wrong,  
And to my mind a pity.'

Up she comes to me quite close,  
Shoots a glance, that never misses,  
With a smile  
All the while,  
Whispers: 'There must be no kisses.'

T. P.

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